

News from the Savannah River Site

US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY • AIKEN • SC 29808

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:

Julie Petersen, DOE-SR, (803) 952-7690
julie.petersen@srs.gov

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Dean Campbell, SRR, (803) 208-8270
dean.campbell@srs.gov

SAVANNAH RIVER SITE'S LIQUID WASTE PROGRAM SUCCESSSES YIELD A STRONG FISCAL YEAR FINISH

AIKEN, S.C. (October 27, 2015) – In Fiscal Year 2015, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) liquid waste program at the Savannah River Site (SRS) continued a successful track record of reducing the risk of high-level waste at SRS by immobilizing the waste and closing another waste tank. Savannah River Remediation (SRR) is the DOE liquid waste contractor at SRS, and is responsible for processing radioactive waste from aging waste tanks.

The waste – a more radioactive sludge, a less radioactive salt, and contaminated water – is dispositioned through various liquid waste facilities. Removing this waste from the tanks is essential to the Site's mission of cleaning and operationally closing them.

Liquid waste accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2015 included:

- Operationally closing Tank 16 ahead of schedule by filling it with a cement-like grout. It is the seventh underground radioactive high-level waste storage tank closed at the Site, and the fifth tank closed by SRR since 2012.
- Producing 93 canisters of glassified waste at the Site's Defense Waste Processing Facility by turning the sludge into glass. That fiscal year production brings the total number of canisters of immobilized waste to 1,233 since the SRR contract began on July 1, 2009, and a total of 3,970 since DWPF operations began in 1996.
- Processing approximately 752,000 gallons of salt waste at the Actinide Removal Process (ARP)/Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (MCU), bringing the total salt waste prepared to about 5 million gallons under the SRR contract. ARP/MCU removes nearly all radioactive isotopes from the salt waste and separates the salt waste into highly radioactive and decontaminated waste streams for dispositioning.

(more)

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FY15 Accomplishments

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- Disposing of about 828,000 gallons of Decontaminated Salt Solution and 1.5 million gallons of grout through the Saltstone facilities, bringing the total number of gallons of this waste dispositioned to 8.1 million gallons of Decontaminated Salt Solution and 14.1 million gallons of grout under the SRR contract.
- Finishing the primary construction on Saltstone Disposal Unit 6, the first 30-million gallon mega-volume salt waste disposal unit being built at SRS. The decontaminated salt solution is mixed with grout and placed into these units.
- Creating 2.7 million gallons of tank space through the Site's two Evaporators. This is the largest amount of space gain since 2010.

The fiscal year operational accomplishments and tank closures continue to reduce risk and set the stage for the future.

"The liquid waste work at the Savannah River Site is making good progress toward our objectives of safely dispositioning waste and protecting the public and the environment," said Jack Craig, DOE-Savannah River Manager. "I'm pleased to see the success SRR achieved during another challenging year."

One key reason SRR employees were successful in Fiscal Year 2015 is because they worked the greatest number of hours without a days-away injury in the 6-plus years of the SRR contract.

"Safe work performance is paramount in our business. We want workers to go home each day in the same condition they arrived," said Stuart MacVean, SRR President and Project Manager. "By doing each job safely, we were able to accomplish more of our mission objectives. I'm proud of their determination to focus on safety while providing the government with solid results based on innovation and cost effectiveness."

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